



## MDCR/MCRC E-newsletter for May 31, 2013

### [Judge compares alleged profiling of Muslims at border with NYC's stop-and-frisk program](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/30/13

A federal judge in Detroit compared the alleged profiling of Muslim Americans at border crossings to claims that the New York City Police Department is targeting African Americans with its controversial stop-and-frisk program.

### [BET founder Robert L. Johnson: Companies need to interview minority candidates for high-level jobs](#)

From MLive, 5/29/13

MACKINAC ISLAND, MI — Affirmative action legislation and quotas aren't the answer to closing the unemployment gap between black and white Americans, said Robert L. Johnson, founder of Black Entertainment Television.

### [Church drops Boy Scout program after gay ban lifted](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/29/13

LOUISVILLE, KY. — An evangelical Christian church here with more than 30,000 members will break ties with the Boy Scouts of America because it believes the youth organization has become too polarizing, its executive pastor said.

### [Michigan has stake in U.S. immigration debate with 150,000 undocumented residents](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/28/13

Celestino Ramirez works, pays his taxes, and has a mortgage on his modest one-story home. The only thing that separates the 38-year-old Ann Arbor father of three from most other Americans is his immigration status.

### [Graham Couch: Latest lawsuit rehashes girls basketball scheduling imperfections](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 5/27/13

There is no perfect way to schedule girls high school basketball.

There never really was and there might never be.

### **Gay Couple's Property Filing Could Test Same-Sex Marriage Ban**

From Gongwer, 5/28/13

MASON - The move by a gay couple Tuesday to file a document with the Ingham County Register of Deeds to ensure the survivor would inherit their property if the other dies is the latest test of the state's ban on same-sex marriage.

Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope and Brad Rakowski, who were married in Canada in 2004, signed an affidavit in an effort to secure property rights for their marriage at the Ingham County Register of Deeds office. Their marriage license is now attached to the affidavit, which will go into the county's deeds system and become public record. If anyone wants to challenge their property rights, they will have to go through the courts.

"I believe this is a step in the right direction for equality," Mr. Rakowski said. "I'm not backing down from the state and I'm not backing down from (Attorney General) Bill Schuette and his hatred, so let them try something, because I'm not going away. I'm here to stay."

Mr. Schuette is a staunch defender of the state's same-sex marriage ban, which voters placed into the Constitution in 2004.

Mr. Schuette has not made any recent comments about the 2004 statewide approval of the ban on gay marriage, so it was unclear what the genesis of Mr. Rakowski's comments was.

Because same-sex marriage is banned in Michigan, when a same-sex couple gets married elsewhere and returns to the state, they have no automatic joint property rights. Even if the couple has a will, if one of the partners dies, the remaining partner could possibly lose the house and property they shared if the family challenges the will. This is not an issue for heterosexual married couples, though unmarried heterosexual couples can also establish rights of survivorship on property.

The signed affidavit will only have legal repercussions if someone challenges the document or if Mr. Swope or Mr. Rakowski seeks to use the document following his partner's death. If that is the case, Mr. Swope and Ingham County Register of Deeds Curtis Hertel Jr. said they are willing to fight for this issue and are prepared for a court battle.

"One of the toughest (calls) that I get is from a member of a same-sex couple that has lost their partner," Mr. Hertel said. "Not only is losing their partner unfortunate, but it usually results in them losing their home. We believe by putting this record into the archives of the register of deeds office, we are making one important political statement."

Mr. Swope, Mr. Rakowski and Mr. Hertel said they hope other same-sex couples will follow suit.

Mr. Schuette's spokesperson declined to comment.

#### [Racial Diversity Efforts Ebb for Elite Careers, Analysis Finds](#)

From the New York Times, 5/27/13

HOUSTON — As a partner and chief diversity officer at Thompson & Knight, Pauline Higgins was not afraid to press the issue of hiring minorities at the 126-year-old Texas law firm. But when she left in 2008, she was replaced by an associate with less influence.

#### [Say yes, Michigan: Marriage equality now](#)

From Model D, 5/21/13

My partner of seven years and I were married last September in a small ceremony on the Detroit River. The next day, we celebrated with a big picnic on Belle Isle. It was wonderful: simple, informal, and (almost entirely) stress-free. Family and friends streamed in and out steadily all day, bearing goodwill and great food, chatting, relaxing, and playing games until nightfall. In the end, our union was

thoroughly witnessed and enthusiastically affirmed, and we understood, for the first time, really, the extent to which our community's love and support surrounds and strengthens our relationship.

#### [Mascot bill embarrasses its sponsors](#)

From the Times Herald, 5/20/13

In his battle against the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, state Rep. Dan Lauwers, R-Brockway Township, is lobbing another grenade. House Bill 4734, legislation Lauwers and Rep. Bob Genetski, R-Saugatuck, introduced last week, would have the MDCR pay for its opposition to American Indian mascots some Michigan public schools have.

#### [Panel addresses civil rights concerns in Holland](#)

From the Holland Sentinel, 5/17/13

Holland — While Holland, West Michigan and the state as a whole have come a long way with civil rights, there is still room for improvement, a group of panelist agreed Thursday.

#### [Charles Schoder works to strengthen Arab American outreach through MDCR](#)

From the Arab American News, 5/16/13

DETROIT — The Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) recently appointed Charles Schoder as the Civil Rights Specialist and Liaison to the Arab American Community, replacing former Civil Rights Specialist Leila Saba-Hanna, who after a car accident was unable to continue fulfilling her duties.

#### [One of Two Bay City men initially charged with hate crime gets probation on assault count](#)

From MLive, 5/16/13

BAY CITY, MI — A Bay County judge had some cautionary words for a man who wound up facing criminal charges after being involved in a large fight in Bay City's Midland Street bar district.

#### [Former Shiawassee County jail guard claims he was fired for reporting discrimination to newspaper](#)

From MLive, 5/16/13

CORUNNA, MI -- A former Shiawassee County jail guard is suing the county claiming he lost his job because he complained to a local newspaper about racial discrimination at the sheriff's department.

#### [New generation of American Indians challenges Redskins](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/10/13

WASHINGTON -- Amanda Blackhorse has never met Daniel Snyder, but she's thought about what she might say to him if she ever does.

#### **From MIRS, 5/9/13: Tlaib Wants Breast Feeding Covering (sic) Under Civil Rights Act**

Rep. Rashida TLAIB (D-Detroit) introduced a bill today that wraps women who breastfeed in public into the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

The bill would prevent businesses from making it clear that a woman's patronage or presence is objectionable, unwelcome, unacceptable or undesirable because she is breastfeeding a child.

"There are proven health benefits for both babies and mothers who breastfeed, and it's unfortunate that it still carries an unfair stigma in our society," Tlaib said. "We should be encouraging moms to breastfeed their infants, not discouraging it by unfairly judging and discriminating against nursing mothers."

### [Justice Department Settles Lawsuit Against Golden Corral Restaurant for Violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

From the US Department of Justice, 5/8/13

The Department of Justice announced today the settlement of its lawsuit against the Golden Corral restaurant in Westland, Mich., which alleged that the owners and operators of the Golden Corral violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by denying service to a mother and her minor children based on the appearance of the children's skin due to a genetic skin disorder.

### [Why do we need local laws protecting LGBT residents? Lansing area officials weigh in](#)

From MLive, 5/8/13

LANSING — A group of Lansing-area state, county and municipal lawmakers today [launched One Capitol Region](#), a coalition of local elected officials committed to passing local legislation outlawing discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people.

### [Equality for gay people would help state's economy](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/7/13

Michigan's governor is on record that he's "against discrimination."

### [Bay City men charged with felony hate crimes plead down to misdemeanor assault charges](#)

From MLive, 5/7/13

BAY CITY — Two Bay City friends initially charged with felony hate crimes in the wake of a Midland Street bar fight have pleaded down to misdemeanor assault counts.

### [Milan community struggles to get behind new school mascot and logo](#)

From the Milan News-Leader, 5/7/13

Finding a mascot and a logo the community as a whole can embrace is proving to be difficult for Milan Area Schools, according to a report in the Milan News-Leader.

### [Workers Claim Race Bias as Farms Rely on Immigrants](#)

From the New York Times, 5/6/13

VIDALIA, Ga. — For years, labor unions and immigrant rights activists have accused large-scale farmers, like those harvesting sweet Vidalia onions here this month, of exploiting Mexican guest workers. Working for hours on end under a punishing sun, the pickers are said to be crowded into squalid camps, driven without a break and even cheated of wages.

### [Shifting The Paradigm To Be The Architects of Change](#)

From PrideSource/Between the Lines, 5/3/13

Since DOMA landed on the steps of the Supreme Court, support for LGBTQ equality seems to be busting out all over.

#### [Catholic families plan prayer vigil over no-communion stance](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/2/13

Tom Nelson and Linda Karle-Nelson, lifelong Catholics, are the parents of gay adult children who are in committed relationships.

#### [Abused disabled Iowa plant workers awarded \\$240M](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/2/13

Iowa City, Iowa— An Iowa jury on Wednesday awarded a total of \$240 million to 32 mentally disabled Iowa turkey processing plant workers for what government lawyers described as years of around-the-clock abuse and discrimination by the Texas company that oversaw their care, work and lodging.

#### [Wall in Detroit that once divided races remains, teaches](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/2/13

Detroit — When Eva Nelson-McClendon first moved to Detroit's Birwood Street in 1959, she didn't know much about the wall across the street. At 6 feet tall and a foot thick, it wasn't so imposing, running as it did between houses on her street and one over. Then she started to hear the talk.

#### [Detroit-area Muslims search for answers, understanding in light of Boston Bombings](#)

From MLive, 5/2/13

DEARBORN, MI — When it was revealed that the two primary suspects in the Boston Marathon bombings were Muslim, many of the wounds opened by 9/11 became fresh again for Arab-Americans and Muslims across the country. In Dearborn, the terror attacks were resoundingly denounced and met with anger as local Arab and Muslim leaders had to defend themselves and their faith in the aftermath of the attacks.

#### [Flint-area teacher says ban on same-sex marriage 'makes me feel like a second-class citizen'](#)

From MLive, 5/1/13

GENESEE COUNTY, MI —For seven years, Frank Burger has called Michael Latesky his husband.

#### [Davison organizer of Michigan's anti-gay marriage amendment: 'We believe that's the biblical standard'](#)

From MLive, 5/1/13

GENESEE COUNTY, MI — A Davison man who helped launch Michigan's constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage predicted the day would come when the federal Defense of Marriage Act was challenged.

#### [Tenn. lawmaker's Facebook post frightens Muslims](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/1/13

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A Coffee County commissioner's Facebook post suggesting Muslims are best greeted from behind a rifle barrel is prompting demands for an apology.

#### [Law Day a reminder of the importance of giving back](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/1/13

"Life's most persistent and urgent question," Martin Luther King Jr. once remarked, is "What are you doing for others?"

#### [Federal financial aid form to recognize same-sex parents](#)

From WDIV, 5/1/13

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) - Even though the federal government doesn't recognize same-sex marriage, the Department of Education won't let this stance impact its financial aid decisions any longer.

[Jason Collins news he's gay could soon lead to Detroit pro athlete's disclosure, LGBT expert says](#)

From MLive, 4/29/13

DETROIT, MI - News Monday of NBA player Jason Collins' announcement he's gay could soon inspire an athlete for one of Detroit's pro teams to reveal he's also a homosexual.